

**Goldie Played a Deep Game, but She Wasn't Quite Sure Which Way That Matter Should Have Been Decided**

BEFORE I took hold of Duke Meehan he'd been fluffing around in them amateur shows for a year or so. wasn't so keen about stabilizing the kid, but an old pal of mine that was his uncle used to give the boy a chance at the pay end of the game and I does so.

Duke's a weller and a nice enough looking lad. Take ten average boxers and this cuckoo was the average of them.

In about a month I work Duke into a prelim at a club up in Harlem. The boy I got him matched with is a flashy fist-slinger that looks good but is really rotten. Meehan's the class of this row and gets the decision after seven rounds of this and that. If he'd a really been there himself he'd a knocked the other kid out so quick the last thing he'd a remembered would be shaking hands.

For some reason, maybe because the main go was a flop, the sport writers give Duke a grand send-off and in the next five or six days I gets three offers to start my boy against some real gate pullers, and I finally signs up for a twelve-round fisticuffs with Sailor Steffens, a guy that got his start boxing the compass on a warship. He's a tough scrapper and I don't figure Meehan's got any chance of beating him, so I sees to it that the loser's end ain't lost sight of in the snuffie for the winner's cakes.

"You talk like you don't expect to win," says Bud Riley, the club matchmaker.

"Not a chance of losing," I comes back, "but I don't like to see none of our gallant boys in blue get nothing for no beating. Give the lads a bonus, says I."

"Them sentiments does your creditors," cuts in Smiley, the Sailor's manager, "and I'm willing to fall for them terms of yours providing you and me make a side bet of about three thousand smackers. What do you say?"

I stalk around a while and finally lets myself in for a two-grand gamble that Steffens can't shush my baby to sleep inside of eight rounds. While I ain't got no ideas that Meehan can win I figures he can maybe cover up and side step the Sailor's haymakers long enough to cash for me. Duke makes a roar about the arrangements me and Smiley puts over him having the notion they ain't nothing he can't tick, but I can talk louder than him and the deal stands.

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WELL, the milly ain't on for more than a minute when I'm willing to pay Smiley nineteen hundred and eighty-six dollars if he'll call it off. Steffens hits me with every thing except a roar and Meehan does this for hisself three times before the bell gives him a chance to drag his wobbly dogs to the corner.

Duke ain't all there when the second stanza begins and the Sailor goes right to work at the finishing touches but like most of them half-backed box-fighters overdoes his stuff. He don't take no aim and shoots wild. Meehan catches a few of 'em but they don't make him feel any worse than he is already. One of Steffens' swings is a clean miss and he put so much behind it that he loses his balance and flops to the floor hitting the back of his head against one of the ring posts. When he gets up he's slowed up considerable, and Duke starts some wild swinging on his account. He ain't got much strength but a wallop aimed at the Sailor's jaw catches him over the heart and he hits the canvas with his nose. The referee starts counting and if he'd a kept it up until Steffens was ready to work again he'd run outta numbers.

The boy's luck don't leave him none after the Steffens row. In the next couple months he wins two more arguments against boys that shoulda beaten him to death. I don't have hardly nothing to do to get business for the lad.

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deal more explaining than I do to most people." \* \* \*

I READ the thing over. Buried in a lot of parties of the thistly parts and a mess of wits and vices is the info that this cuckoo will pay Meehan five hundred dolars per week for thirty weeks to show in a stage stunt about twenty minutes a couple times a day. They is two ideas in Moe's scheme that draws interest from me—the dough and the notion of keeping Duke outta the fight game for seven or eight months while the newspapers is steaming up a knockout crowd for us when we is ready to give our luck another workout.

"What does the boy do?" I asks Goldberg. "Shadow boxing and bag punching?"

"Something like that," says he. "Only they is a gal in the piece and Meehan's got a few lines to pull but they ain't nothing that takes any brains. What kinda voice is the kid got? Think he can get by with a song?"

"I got a idea they ain't no notes he knows excepting dough and me," I tells him. "Them's the two things he's strongest on."

I finally tells Moe his stunt is K. O. with me and I figures I can bring Duke in line. I promises to fetch the boy over in the afternoon and get this Jack Hancock on the dotty line.

Meehan kinda likes the idea of showing himself off to the publics.

"Think you can get by with a song?" I asks.

"Sure," he answers. "Take a listen," and he essays to thrill off a few notes.

"Now that it's settled that you can't," says I. "Let's go over to Goldberg's and give the music idea the bum's rush."

Moe's got the piece Meehan's gonna act in all ready. Here's the how of it: When the curtain goes up Duke's sitting in a gymnasium reading a book—deaf stuff like Elsie Dinsmore or The Life of Battling Nelson when a Jane crashes the gate. She's got into the wrong joint but Meehan starts a gab-feast with her. The gal pipes the book and is surprised that a box-fighter should be going in for such top-heavy junk or maybe even that he can read at all. This is Duke's cue to make a few cracks about how the punch boys has been misjudged and vot really swell guys they is and he finishes up by telling the frail they ain't nothing that gives him more pleasures than to lay around the art museums and going to the uproots.

The Jane in the piece suddenly gets a yen that she'd like to see a fightin in action and while Duke goes outta the exit to change his scenery she pulls a song and dance. Meehan comes back and goes through a lot of rope-jumping, bag-punching and the rest of the hop. For a encore, if they is any, Duke is to tell how he licked Dixon.

"Who's the gal?" the kid wants to know.

"Goldie Lark," Moe tells him. "Ever hear of her?"

"Is that the chicken in the sins of 1922?" I asks.

"That's the baby," says Goldberg. "Funny how I happened to get her. She drops in a couple days ago and tells me she hears as how I'm going to put Meehan out and wants that I should use her. Says she isn't so crazy about the dough, but would sure like to be in this act with Duke. So I grabs her quick. She'll be a card herself," a looker," cuts in Meehan.

"She's a knockout, boy," says Moe. "She'll make the act go even if you don't turn out to be no John Drew."

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THE next couple weeks we has re-hearsals. Goldie is a bear on looks and fox in the head. You don't have to tell her nothing once and right away she can show you where it's wrong.

Duke takes a quick flop for her, but when he's pulling his stuff Goldie gives him a kinda sneery look, as if she was saying to herself, "You poor fathead. Why don't you get out and fight, instead of stallin around on the stage?"

Moe's idea is to make all the big tanks from New York to San Francisco, finishing up in the Big Stall in the spring, on the trip back.

The papers give us a lotta kidding about not giving Dixon no return match and Gallagher throws apocryphal fits over the sport pages. The day before we is ready to open in Newark I runs into him on the street.

"When you gonna give us another crack?" he asks.

"Do you really want one?" I comes back surprised. "I thought you was just bulling the newspapers so you could get a go for your boy with the second-raters."

Gallagher throws me a mean glare. "If I knew you was on the square," says I. "We never woulda gone in for this drama stuff. Meehan's sore as a boil because the row with Dixon went more 'an a round. He didn't figure that baby of yours would last over a minute at the mostest."

"That so," backs Biddy. "If you and that horsehoe ham of yours feels that way about it, what say to a winner-take-all row with about ten grand bet on the side?"

"Nothing could give me more pleasure," I answers, "but we got a fat show contract we can't bust."

"Don't let that spoil your booty sleep," comes back Gallagher. "You forfeit with Goldberg and I'll pay the rifle."

"Ah," says I. "they is one thing you forgets."

"What's that?" he wants to know. "The duties me and Meehan owes to art," I replies.

At the Newark opener the act gets a fair hand and Duke has a chance to tell how he licked Dixon. Me and Goldie is in the wings. The gal gives his stuff a grouchy ear.

"What's eatin you, kid?" I asks.

"It ain't none of my business," says she, "but it kinda makes me sore to hear a guy bragging about knockin out a boy that was so sick he could hardly stand up."

"You see the mill?" I inquires.

"No," she answers, "but I got it straight that Dixon climbed outta bed to take on that fathead."

"Maybe yes," I admits, "but if that cuckoo hadn't been sick they woulda been some other break that woulda copped for Duke. That baby's got more luck than you got looks."

"Some day it'll run out on him," says Goldie and ducks.

# DUKE'S FLUKE



DUKE'S SO FLABBERTASTED HE AINT EVEN GOT SENSE ENOUGH TO RAISE HIS MITTS.

Nothing special don't happen for a couple weeks. We makes all the big sized towns and get a good deal of razzing from the newspapers because we won't give Dixon no return match right away, which kinda gets Duke's goat.

"Ain't you?" sneers Meehan.

"I would be," flings back the gal.

"That'll be about all," I butts in.

"You ain't afraid of him, is you?" asks Goldie. The further we goes the meaner that gal gets.

"Me," yells Meehan. "I ain't afraid of nobody."

"Yeh," jeers the Jane. "I guess you can lick any guy in the city hospital."

"Cut out them personalities," growls the Duke.

"Cut out them grammar," comes back Goldie. "If you're a real scrapback I'm the greatest actress in the world."

"Ain't you?" sneers Meehan.

"I would be," flings back the gal.

"That'll be about all," I butts in.

"We got to stick together for a long time yet and they ain't use of us two barking at each other like a pair of Bill Kenney's cats."

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ME and Goldie gets along pretty good, but she and Meehan don't hardly speak unless they happens to think of something sassy.

"You is," I admits, "and personally I think you're a good kid but if you

"They is one thing I don't understand," I says to the gal one night when we is away out west in Columbus, Ohio. "If looking at Meehan gives you such a sour eye full why did you front with Goldberg for a part in the act?"

"That's easy," she answers. "The sins was due for a early flop and besides I figured I'd get a lot of press stuff that wouldn't hurt."

"Well," says I. "if you and Duke keep battling around you is likely to find yourself hitting the rails back to Broadway, pretty soon."

"I'm doing my work right, ain't I?" she snaps.

"You is," I admits, "and personally I think you're a good kid but if you

keep razzing Meehan he's likely to throw up the works and the cow ain't nearly milked yet."

"Think he will?" she asks with a kinda funny expression.

"I don't know," I tells her. "but the boy ain't so happy about the way you treats him. He'd fall for you in a minute if you give him half a chance."

Goldie changes subjects but that night she gets me in her arms again. In this show as I was telling you Duke is reading a book when this Lark lady busts into the gym. She's supposed to take a pep at it and look surprised but she don't say nothing. But this time she does.

"Good gracious," she chatters.

## LABOR DAY AND ITS PLEASURES

### Wallace Irwin's Letters of a Japanese Schoolboy

To Editor. The Star, who cannot knock very far off on Labor Day or others.

DEAREST Sir: K. K. Katazumi are the only Japanese bricklayer now alive in America. Reason why he remain living are this: he never lays any bricks. Last time he attempt to do so were in 1891 when he laid two (2). But gentleman who owned a Union were there first and laid three (3). He layed them on the forehead of this Hon. Katazumi with such strength that they broke. Since then Hon. Katazumi has not been laying.

But still he remain quite an enthusiast for labor, because it give him much time for ball game, thinking and other sports. America, he say, are too full of hurly, also burly, and it are nice to have something that keep people's minds off of work.

Last Friday p.m. he come walking to my kitchen like a delegate for Servant Girls' Union. I see him from dishpan where I was doing some slavery.

"Ah, Togo!" he narrate, "are it possible that you are not going to take a week end lay-off for Labor day?"

"Every day is Labor Day with me," I retort with music-comical expression.

"If so?" he stumbles. "How sweetish life must be for you, then. Nothing to do but march in parades every morning and go to a barber's every afternoon. Or maybe a clam-shell pick-nack. Or maybe you have a Ford & can spend all time amusing that dear little annimile."

"You are talking diagonally!" I snarl with my angry hands in the dishwash. "Are not Labor Day best time to labor?" I ask to know.

"When you gonna give us another crack?" he asks.

"Do you really want one?" I comes back surprised. "I thought you was just bulling the newspapers so you could get a go for your boy with the second-raters."

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"In solid armies," he acquire. "They will be led by that famous strategist Gen. Housekeeper on a pure white clothes horse. The celebrated Kitchen Ware Band will be there also playing the servants' national anthem, 'Every Day'll Be Thursday Bye and Bye.'

He show me an enlarged tipewritten list for following information:

Boat Industry: 1—bootmakers; 2—bootblackers; 3—bootleggers.

Shop Industry: 1—retail shops; 2—sweet shop; 3—bucket shops.

Paper Industry: 1—wrapping paper; 2—newspaper; 3—sandpaper.

Iron Industry: 1—pigiron; 2—mid-iron; 3—flatiron.

There were seventy-seven pages

"Oh, extremely yes!" I report for slight sentiment. "For what would people do unless they get knocked off their work sometimes?"